UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA INDIANAPOLIS DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)
Plaintiff,)
v.) Cause No. 1:19-cv-770
\$39,000.00 UNITED STATES CURRENCY,)
Defendant.)

COMPLAINT OF FORFEITURE IN REM

The United States of America, by counsel, Josh J. Minkler, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, and Eric P. Babbs, Special Assistant United States Attorney, alleges as follows:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This is a civil action seeking forfeiture of certain property pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6) because the Defendant Property constitutes proceeds of, or is property used to facilitate, a violation of the Controlled Substances Act.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1345 (district courts have original jurisdiction of all civil actions commenced by the United States) and § 1355 (district courts have original jurisdiction of any action for forfeiture).
- 3. This Court has *in rem* jurisdiction over the Defendant Property pursuant to 28 U.S. C. § 1355(b) (forfeiture action can be brought in district in which any of the acts giving rise to the forfeiture occurred), and Rule G(3)(b)(i) of the Supplemental Rules for Admiralty or Maritime Claims and Asset Forfeiture Actions (clerk must issue a warrant to arrest property in

the government's possession).

4. This Court is the appropriate venue in this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1395(a) and (b), in that the forfeiture accrued in the Southern District of Indiana.

DEFENDANT

5. The Defendant is Thirty-Nine Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$39,000.00) in United States Currency ("the Defendant Currency"). The Defendant Currency was taken into custody of the United States Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection ("DHS-CBP"). The Defendant Currency has been assigned Asset Identification Number 18-CBP-000498.

FACTS

- 6. On May 17, 2018, officers with the Homeland Security Investigations Parcel/Bulk Cash Smuggling Interdiction Task Force, comprised of the Indiana State Police ("ISP"), the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department ("IMPD"), and the Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations ("DHS-HSI"), conducted a parcel / bulk cash smuggling interdiction operation at a parcel shipping company hub in Indianapolis.
- 7. Parcel / bulk cash smuggling interdiction operations are conducted because it has become common practice for smugglers to use shipping companies, such as Federal Express, to transport illegal controlled substances and their proceeds. Shipping companies provide illegal controlled substances smugglers with many benefits such as faster delivery with predictable dates, package tracking, and delivery confirmation. Based on information and experience, task force officers can easily identify suspicious packages with indicators, such as newly-bought boxes from the shipping company and excessive tape at the seams of the packages. Suspicious packages are typically sent via priority overnight shipping that has been paid for with cash. To

preserve anonymity, smugglers often use falsified addresses, phone numbers, or names. Packages sent to known source states for illegal controlled substances (*e.g.*, Texas, Arizona, California) draw increased suspicion, as do those sent from individual to individual, from non-business sender to non-business receiver, and from residence to residence. Traffickers will often package in a layered manner in an attempt to avoid detection by trained narcotics detection canines. The layered packaging is usually an attempt to mask or prevent any odors from escaping the interior of the package. Traffickers rarely include any type of instruction with the proceeds. Legitimate business items or personal gifts typically contain such notes, letters, receipts, cards, or coupons along with the cash or monetary instruments.

- 8. On or about May 17, 2018, during the course of the operation, a package being shipped by parcel service with a shipping label attached reflecting a tracking number of 7810 0148 0913 ("Parcel 0913" or the "Package"), was identified as suspicious.
- 9. Parcel 0913 was addressed to Romina Isayan, 210 E Garfield Avenue, Apt. 17, Glendale, CA 91205, TX#310-344-2129, and with a sender address of Master Apparel, 905 2nd Street, Canonsburg, PA 15317, TX#412-298-1196. The package drew attention for several reasons, including that the sealed newly bought box had extra external tape; it was marked for priority overnight delivery; the mailing was paid for in cash; it was sent from a residence to a residence; and it was being sent to a source state (California) with no signature required upon delivery. In addition, the package was mailed from a shipping center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania about 20 miles from the sender's address.



- 10. According to an open source internet search, the sender business appears to be fictitious and the area code for the sender's phone is Pittsburgh, PA not Canonsburg, PA.
- 11. On May 17, 2018, a certified drug detection canine, handled by an Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department ("IMPD") Officer, inspected Parcel 0913, along with other packages. The examination resulted in a positive indication for the presence of the odor of a controlled substance. The drug detection canine had been trained and certified in detection, by odor, of marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine.
- 12. Following the canine alert, Task Force Officers applied for a search warrant from the Marion County Superior Court. Following review, on May 17, 2018, the Marion County Superior Court, Criminal Division, granted a warrant upon finding probable cause to search Parcel 0913 for controlled substances, records of drug trafficking, and proceeds of drug trafficking.
- 13. The officers executed the warrant to open Parcel 0913. Parcel 0913 was a newly purchased sealed box wrapped by extra external tape and inside was a gift-wrapped shoebox surrounded by shipping paper. A pair of shoes were inside the shoebox, and stuffed inside each shoe were bundles of currency wrapped inside double-layer vacuum and heat-sealed plastic

packaging. The multiple bundles of United States Currency totaled \$39,000.00. As discussed above, this multi-layered packaging is a common method to bundle United States Currency and drugs in an attempt to thwart an alert for the presence of the odor of a controlled substance by a certified drug detection canine. No note, instructions, or other documents were included with the \$39,000.00 in currency.







- 14. After the package was opened, officers conducted an inspection of the currency using the drug detection canine. The canine again alerted for the presence of the odor of a controlled substance.
- 15. Believing there was probable cause that the currency constituted proceeds of, and/or was property used to facilitate, violations of the Controlled Substances Act, the \$39,000.00 was seized and taken into custody by law enforcement.
- 16. On June 18, 2018, agents and analysts conducted background research on the information provided on Parcel 0913's shipping label. CLEAR and business searches were negative for "MASTER APPAREL." Further, the telephone number provided for the sender, "412-298-1196," was not associated with Master Apparel.
- 17. When searching the sender address, Google Earth and CLEAR records checks showed it was a legitimate physical address. According to Google Earth, a 2016 Chevrolet sport utility vehicle was parked in front of said address. A Pennsylvania license plate: EWH4143 affixed to the 2016 Chevrolet sport utility vehicle was completely visible. A check of this

license plate shows the vehicle is registered to Michael Kerry & Mary V. Glass at 905 2nd Street, Canonsburg, PA 15317. An NCIC query result shows Michael K. Glass, whose FBI number is 715263CA0, has one felony burglary conviction (CC3502 Pennsylvania Code) that occurred in 1984. Glass also has two misdemeanor drunk driving arrests – DUI of alcohol or a controlled substance (VC3731A1 Pennsylvania Code) – both of which resulted in a conviction.

- 18. A search on the receiver name and address on the parcel showed that Romina Isayan was associated with the receiver address. An NCIC query result shows Romina Isayan, a citizen of Armenia and a lawfully admitted permanent resident of the United States, whose FBI Number is 521593JD8, has two misdemeanor DUI arrests. The arrest in 2010 resulted in a conviction. The disposition of the arrest in 2013 is unknown.
- 19. On August 27, 2018, the Marion Superior Court, Civil Division, issued its order transferring the Defendant Currency to the appropriate federal authority. *See* Marion County Superior Court, Civil Division, Docket 49D13-1805-MI-020412. In this case, the Defendant Currency was transferred to DHS-HSI, which subsequently transferred the Defendant Currency to DHS-CBP.
- 20. DHS-CBP sent letters to both Master Apparel and Romina Isayan on September12, 2018, in order to address the matter, short of judicial forfeiture.
 - 21. To date, neither Master Apparel nor Romina Isayan has contacted DHS-CPB.
- 22. It is against Federal Express policy, as stated on its website, to ship cash via Federal Express. *See* FedEx Freight FXF 100 Series Rules Tariff, *available at* https://www.fedex.com/en-us/service-guide/terms/other-services.html.

PERTINENT STATUTES

- 23. Under 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1)-(2), it is unlawful for any person to manufacture, distribute, or dispense—or possess with intent to manufacture, distribute, or dispense—a controlled substance.
- 24. Under 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(6), all moneys furnished or intended to be furnished by any person in exchange for a controlled substance, all proceeds traceable to such an exchange, and all moneys used or intended to be used to facilitate any violation of the Controlled Substances Act, including 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1), shall be subject to forfeiture to the United States, and no property right shall exist in them.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF

25. Based on the factual allegations set forth above, the Defendant Currency is "moneys . . . furnished or intended to be furnished by any person in exchange for a controlled substance," and/or "proceeds traceable to such an exchange," and/or "moneys . . . used or intended to be used to facilitate any violation of [the Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.]," and are therefore subject to forfeiture to the United States of America pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 881(a)(6).

WHEREFORE, the United States prays that the Clerk of the Court issue a warrant for the arrest of the Defendant Currency pursuant to Rule G(3)(b)(i) of the Supplemental Rules for Admiralty or Maritime Claims and Asset Forfeiture Actions; that due notice be given to all parties to appear and show cause why the forfeiture should not be decreed; that judgment be

entered declaring the Defendant Currency forfeited to the United States for disposition according to law; and that the United States be granted all other just and proper relief.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSH J. MINKLER United States Attorney

By: <u>s/Eric P. Babbs</u>

Eric P. Babbs

Special Assistant United States Attorney
Office of the United States Attorney

10 W. Market St., Suite 2100 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-3048

Telephone: (317) 226-6333

Fax: (317) 226-5027

VERIFICATION

I, G. Scott Thompson, hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury that I am a Special Agent for Homeland Security Investigations ("HSI"), that I have read the foregoing Verified Complaint in Rem and know the contents thereof, and that the matters contained in the Complaint are true to my own knowledge, except that those matters herein stated to be alleged on information and belief, and as to those matters I believe to be true.

The sources of my knowledge and information and the grounds of my belief are the official files and records of the United States, information supplied to me by other law enforcement offices, as well as my investigation of this case, together with others, as a Special Agent with HSI.

I hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: 02-19-2019

G. Scott Thompson Special Agent, HSI

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The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	SEE INSTRUCT	HONS ON NEXT TAGE O	T THIS I'C	DEFENDANTS			
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☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	☐ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government in	Not a Party)		(For Diversity Cases Only) P1 en of This State		Incorporated or Pri	
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh.)	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citiz	en of Another State	2 🗖 2	Incorporated and P of Business In A	
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT		orts	F	ORFEITURE/PENALTY	RAN	KRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
□ 110 Insurance □ 120 Marine □ 130 Miller Act □ 140 Negotiable Instrument □ 150 Recovery of Overpayment	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 360 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 440 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 448 Education	PERSONAL INJUR PERSONAL INJUR 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability Product Liability Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPER 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability PRISONER PETITION Habeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence 530 General 535 Death Penalty Other: 540 Mandamus & Oth 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	1	25 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 20 Other LABOR 10 Fair Labor Standards Act 20 Labor/Management Relations 10 Railway Labor Act 51 Family and Medical Leave Act 20 Other Labor Litigation 21 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION 52 Naturalization Application 55 Other Immigration Actions	□ 422 Appe □ 423 With 28 U: PROPEF □ 820 Copy: □ 830 Paten □ 840 Trade SOCIAL □ 861 HIA (□ 862 Black □ 863 DIW(□ 864 SSID (□ 865 RSI (□ 870 Taxes or De □ 871 IRS— 26 U:	al 28 USC 158 drawal SC 157 RTY RIGHTS rights t t tmark SECURITY (1395ff) £ Lung (923) C/DIWW (405(g)) Title XVI 405(g)) SL TAX SUITS G (U.S. Plaintiff efendant)	□ 375 False Claims Act □ 400 State Reapportionment □ 410 Antitrust □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Commerce □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced ar Corrupt Organizations □ 480 Consumer Credit □ 490 Cable/Sat TV □ 850 Securities/Commodities Exchange □ 890 Other Statutory Actions □ 891 Agricultural Acts □ 893 Environmental Matters □ 895 Freedom of Information Act □ 896 Arbitration □ 899 Administrative Procedu Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision □ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	Brief description of ca	nuse:					
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS UNDER RULE 2	IS A CLASS ACTION 3, F.R.Cv.P.	N D	EMAND \$		HECK YES only :	if demanded in complaint:
VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	E(S) (See instructions):	JUDGE			DOCKE	T NUMBER	
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INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- **I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- **II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.

 United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.

United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included nere. United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.

Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.

Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.)**

- **III. Residence** (citizenship) of Principal Parties. This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- **IV. Nature of Suit.** Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerk(s) in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.
- **V. Origin.** Place an "X" in one of the six boxes.

Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.

Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.

Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.

Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date. Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.

Multidistrict Litigation. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.

- VI. Cause of Action. Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity. Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service
- **VII.** Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P. Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction. Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- **VIII. Related Cases.** This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA INDIANAPOLIS DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
Plaintiff,)	
v.)	Cause No. 1:19-cv-770
\$39,000.00 UNITED STATES CURRENCY,)	
Defendant.)	

WARRANT FOR ARREST OF PROPERTY

TO: ANY OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE OF THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS a Complaint for Forfeiture In Rem has been filed in this Court on the 22nd day of February, 2019, by Josh J. Minkler, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, against thirty-nine thousand dollars in United States Currency ("\$39,000.00"), defendant herein, for reasons and causes set forth in the Complaint;

YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED to take custody of and to deliver the defendant currency into the possession of the United States of America, to be detained in the possession of the United States or its designee until further order of this Court, and you will make return thereon not later than ten (10) days after execution of process.

Dated:	
	Laura A. Briggs, Clerk
	United States District Court
	Southern District of Indiana

Arrest Warrant to be issued by the Clerk pursuant to Rule G(3)(b)(i) of the Supplemental Rules for Admiralty or Maritime Claims and Asset Forfeiture Actions, for property in custody of the United States.